

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS AT SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
SOFIA, BULGARIA
JULY 18, 1994

Question: Secretary, can you tell us how your talks went today?

Sec. Perry: Yes, my talks went very well. What we have signed today is a memorandum of cooperation between the Department of Defense of the United States and the Ministry of Defense of Bulgaria. This is important both for symbolic reasons and for reasons of great practical application, because it will become the framework by which many co-op programs are undertaken to bring our two nations together. I should emphasize that while we are just signing this document today, the cooperation has already begun, and that this simply formalizes a number of cooperative programs already underway and opens the way to many more in the future.

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): A good day for Bulgarian military diplomacy and the basis for a serious beginning! Our cooperation has been going well. Political laws are the first step towards a better future development. In the Bulgarian army newspaper, "Narodna Armia," the full text of the memorandum of understanding will be published. We are very pleased. This is a very good beginning. I must tell you that on the main subjects we discussed today our opinions coincided completely.

Question (in Bulgarian): What is the next step concerning the Bosnian crisis and the Bulgarian involvement in it?

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): We have not yet discussed this topic.

Question: Mr. Minister, we understand that you are proposing that Bulgarian military units be equipped with U.S. military equipment and take part in peace-keeping operations. Has there been a decision on that, and are you proposing such a move?

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): Yes, in principle this question was decided upon. We are very grateful for the opportunity to equip a battalion with U.S. equipment, and it will take part in the peace-keeping in Bosnia.

Question: What kind of equipment?

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): It will be all the necessary equipment for a battalion with the possibility of it's being used. This doesn't mean we will immediately send them to fight somewhere, but we would like to have a unit which is equipped and trained with the standards and requirements of the U.S. Army.

Sec. Perry: Let me add to the Minister's comments. We welcome the formation of this peace-keeping battalion in Bulgaria, and we are anxious to be of assistance, and the immediate program by which we might, by which we can be of assistance is our program in so-called

excess defense articles. This program is limited to non-lethal articles, such as communications equipment, medical equipment, transportation equipment, trucks and vehicles, and I have promised the Minister that I will go into that program and identify all of those items that we can that will be useful to this peace-keeping battalion.

Question (in Bulgarian): Has there been a proposal through the United Nations for a possible participation by Bulgarian armed forces in Haiti?

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): No, no.

Question (in Bulgarian): Has the equipping of such a battalion been discussed for other Balkan countries?

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): No.

Sec. Perry: I can not speak for all of the countries in the Balkan peninsula, but I do know that Rumania has plans somewhat similar to those of Bulgaria, and we will be seeking to provide a similar sort of assistance to Rumania on the same conditions that we would be providing to Bulgaria.

Question: When would this battalion be formed?

Min. Alexandrov (in Bulgarian): This is a matter for military specialists. This is not our business. We have made the political decision, and now the general staff has to decide.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE
VITOSHA BOULEVARD 18 • 1000 SOFIA, BULGARIA

DATE: 19 JULY 1994
TO: LT. COL. JEAN FREITAS
FROM: ERIK HOLM-OLSEN
RE: TRANSCRIPTS OF SECRETARY PERRY'S VISIT TO SOFIA

We have faxed transcript of Panorama interview to Skopje and assume you received, as USIS-Skopje has not advised otherwise. In any case, please find attached another copy of the interview transcript.

Please note also that there is an error in the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary and Minister Alexandrov at the Ministry of Defense. Minister Alexandrov's answer to the second question, two-thirds down the page, should read "...and it will take part in the peace-keeping activities". Thus, the word "activities" should replace the words "in Bosnia". Obviously a major difference; we had not distributed with the error, and wanted to make sure you did not either. Thanks and best of luck on the